



TC1/GB 2002/005703

10/50163

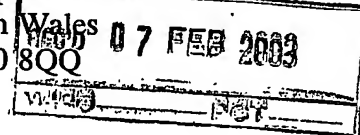


INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

15 JUL 2004

The Patent Office
Concept House
Cardiff Road
Newport

South Wales NP10 8QQ



PRIORITY DOCUMENT

SUBMITTED OR TRANSMITTED IN
COMPLIANCE WITH RULE 17.1(a) OR (b)

I, the undersigned, being an officer duly authorised in accordance with Section 74(1) and (4) of the Deregulation & Contracting Out Act 1994, to sign and issue certificates on behalf of the Comptroller-General, hereby certify that annexed hereto is a true copy of the documents as originally filed in connection with the patent application identified therein.

I also certify that by virtue of an assignment registered under the Patents Act 1977, the application is now proceeding in the name as substituted.

In accordance with the Patents (Companies Re-registration) Rules 1982, if a company named in this certificate and any accompanying documents has re-registered under the Companies Act 1980 with the same name as that with which it was registered immediately before re-registration save for the substitution as, or inclusion as, the last part of the name of the words "public limited company" or their equivalents in Welsh, references to the name of the company in this certificate and any accompanying documents shall be treated as references to the name with which it is so re-registered.

In accordance with the rules, the words "public limited company" may be replaced by p.l.c., plc, P.L.C. or PLC.

Re-registration under the Companies Act does not constitute a new legal entity but merely subjects the company to certain additional company law rules.

Signed

Andrew Gorse

Dated

20 January 2003

BEST AVAILABLE COPY



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

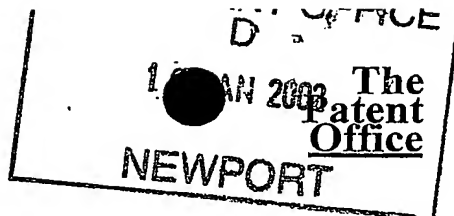
GB 0200891.0

By virtue of a direction given under Section 30 of the Patents Act 1977, the application is proceeding in the name of

JOHNSON MATTHEY PLC,
2-4 Cockspur Street,
Trafalgar Square,
LONDON,
SW1Y 5BQ,
United Kingdom

Incorporated in the United Kingdom,

[ADP No. 08519803001]



1/77

Request for grant of a patent

(see the notes on the back of this form. You can also get an explanatory leaflet from the Patent office to help you fill in this form)

The Patent Office

Cardiff Road
Newport
Gwent NP9 1RH

1 Your reference

SYN 51019

2 Patent application number
(The Patent Office will fill in this part)

0200891.0

16 JAN 2002

3 Full name, address and postcode of the or of each applicant (underline all surnames)

IMPERIAL CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES PLC
Imperial Chemical House
Millbank, London SW1P 3JB

Patents ADP Number (if you know it)

935003

If the applicant is a corporate body, give the country/state of its incorporation

United Kingdom

SECTION 30 (1977 ACT) APPLICATION FILED
12/12/02

4 Title of the invention

HYDROCARBONS

5 Name of Your Agent (if you have one)

GIBSON, Sara Hillary Margaret

"Address for service" in the United Kingdom to which all correspondence should be sent (including the postcode)

Synetix Intellectual Property Department
PO Box 1, Room N101
Belasis Avenue
Billingham
Cleveland
England, TS23 1LB

Patents ADP Number (if you know it)

68963818001

6 If you are declaring priority from one or more earlier patent applications, give the country and the date of filing of the or each of these earlier applications and (if you know it) the or each application number

Country	Priority Application number (if you know it)	Date of Filing (day / month / year)
---------	---	--

7 If this application is divided or otherwise derived from an earlier UK application, give the number and filing date of the earlier application

Number of earlier application	Date of Filing (day / month / year)
-------------------------------	--

8 Is a statement of inventorship and of right to grant of a patent required in support of this request?

Yes

Answer yes if:

- a) any applicant named in part 3 is not an inventor, or
- b) there is an inventor who is not named as an applicant, or
- c) any named applicant is a corporate body.

See Note (d)

Patents Form 1/77

Enter the number of sheets for any of the following items you are filing with this form.
Do not count copies of the same document

Continuation sheets of this form	-
Description	9
Claim(s)	2
Abstract	1
Drawings	1 <i>101</i>

10 If you are also filing any of the following state how many against each item

Priority documents

Translations of priority documents

Statement of Invention and right to grant of a patent (*Patents Form 7/77*)

Request for Preliminary Examination and search (*Patents Form 9/77*)

Request for Substantive Examination (*Patents Form 10/77*)

Any other documents (*Please specify*)

11 I/We request the grant of a patent on the basis of this application

Signature

S H M Gibson

Date

14.01.2002

12 Name and daytime telephone number of person to contact in the United Kingdom

SARA HILLARY MARGARET GIBSON
01642 523860

Warning

After an application for a patent has been filed, the Comptroller of the Patent Office will consider whether publication or communication of the invention should be prohibited or restricted under Section 22 of the Patents Act 1977. You will be informed if it is necessary to prohibit or restrict your invention in this way. Furthermore, if you live in the United Kingdom, Section 23 of the Patents Act 1977 stops you from applying for a patent abroad without first getting written permission from the Patent Office unless an application has been filed at least 6 weeks beforehand in the United Kingdom for a patent for the same invention and either no direction prohibiting publication or communication has been issued, or any such direction has been revoked.

Notes

- If you need help to fill in this form or you have any questions, please contact the Patent Office on 0645 500505
- Write your answers in capital letters using black ink or you may type them.
- If there is not enough space for all the relevant details on any part of this form, please continue on a separate sheet of paper and write "see continuation sheet" in the relevant part(s). Any continuation sheet should be attached to this form.
- If you answered 'Yes' Patents Form 7/77 will need to be filed.
- Once you have filled in the form you must remember to sign and date it.
- For details of the fee and ways to pay please contact the Patent Office.

Patents Form 1/77

Hydrocarbons

This invention relates to the Fischer Tropsch process for the production of hydrocarbons and in particular to the efficient use of carbon values in the feedstock for the production of synthesis gas containing hydrogen and carbon oxides by the catalytic reaction of steam with a hydrocarbon feedstock to be used in the Fischer Tropsch process to produce hydrocarbons.

In the Fischer-Tropsch process, a synthesis gas containing carbon monoxide and hydrogen is reacted in the presence of a catalyst, which is typically a cobalt- and/or iron-containing composition. The process may be effected using one or more fixed catalyst beds or using a moving catalyst, for example a slurry of the catalyst in a hydrocarbon liquid. The product hydrocarbon liquid is separated from the residual gas. The reaction may be carried out in a single pass or part of the residual gas may be combined with fresh synthesis gas and recycled to the Fischer-Tropsch reactor. Any residual gas which is not recycled to the Fischer-Tropsch reactor for further reaction is here termed tail gas. The tail gas contains some light hydrocarbons, e.g. paraffins including methane, ethane, butane, olefins such as propylene, alcohols such as ethanol, and traces of other minor components such as organic acids, in addition to unreacted hydrogen and carbon monoxide. It will generally also contain some carbon dioxide, which may be present in the synthesis gas fed to the Fischer-Tropsch reaction and/or is formed by side reactions. Possibly, as a result of incomplete separation of the liquid hydrocarbon product, the tail gas may also contain a small proportion of higher hydrocarbons, i.e. hydrocarbons containing 5 or more carbon atoms. These components of the tail gas represent a valuable source of fuel.

In the present invention at least part of the tail gas is used for combustion in a gas turbine to provide power for the GTL process. This leads to benefits in process power efficiency and may result in significant plant cost savings because the need for HP steam turbine plant may be significantly reduced or eliminated.

Steam reforming is widely practised and is used to produce hydrogen streams and synthesis gas for a number of processes such as ammonia, methanol and the Fischer-Tropsch process.

In a steam reforming process, a desulphurised hydrocarbon feedstock, e.g. natural gas or naphtha, is mixed with steam and passed at elevated temperature and pressure over a suitable catalyst, generally a transition metal, especially nickel, on a suitable support, for example alumina, magnesia, zirconia, or a calcium aluminate cement. In the steam reforming process, any hydrocarbons containing two or more carbon atoms that are present are converted to carbon monoxide and hydrogen, and in addition, the reversible methane/steam reforming and shift reactions occur. The extent to which these reversible reactions proceed depends upon the reaction conditions, e.g. temperature and pressure, the feed composition and the activity of the reforming catalyst. The methane/steam reforming reaction is highly

endothermic and so the conversion of methane to carbon oxides is favoured by high temperatures. For this reason, steam reforming is usually effected at outlet temperatures above about 600°C, typically in the range 650°C to 950°C, by passing the feedstock/steam mixture over a primary steam reforming catalyst disposed in externally heated tubes. The composition of the product gas depends on, inter alia, the proportions of the feedstock components, the pressure and temperature. The product normally contains methane, hydrogen, carbon oxides, steam and any gas, such as nitrogen, that is present in the feed and which is inert under the conditions employed. For Fischer-Tropsch synthesis, it is desired that the molar ratio of hydrogen to carbon monoxide is about 2 and the amount of carbon dioxide present is small.

In order to obtain a synthesis gas more suited to Fischer-Tropsch synthesis, the primary reformed gas may be subjected to secondary reforming by partially combusting the primary reformed gas using a suitable oxidant, e.g. air or oxygen. This increases the temperature of the reformed gas which is then passed adiabatically through a bed of a secondary reforming catalyst, again usually nickel on a suitable support, to bring the gas composition towards equilibrium. Secondary reforming serves three purposes: the increased temperature resulting from the partial combustion and subsequent adiabatic reforming results in a greater amount of reforming so that the secondary reformed gas contains a decreased proportion of residual methane. Secondly the increased temperature favours the reverse shift reaction so that the carbon monoxide to carbon dioxide ratio is increased. Thirdly the partial combustion effectively consumes some of the hydrogen present in the reformed gas, thus decreasing the hydrogen to carbon oxides ratio. In combination, these factors render the secondary reformed gas formed from natural gas as a feedstock more suited for use as synthesis gas for applications such as Fischer-Tropsch synthesis than if the secondary reforming step was omitted. Also more high grade heat can be recovered from the secondary reformed gas: in particular, the recovered heat can be used to heat the catalyst-containing tubes of the primary reformer. Thus the primary reforming may be effected in a heat exchange reformer in which the catalyst-containing reformer tubes are heated by the secondary reformed gas. The use of oxygen as an oxidant rather than air gives further benefits because no inert nitrogen is introduced into the synthesis gas. This means that recycle of CO₂ which can be easily absorbed from the syngas in the absence of nitrogen or recycle of unreacted FT reaction tail gas are both feasible and increase the feed gas conversion efficiency to FT liquids. Examples of such reformers and processes utilising the same are disclosed in for example US 4 690 690 and US 4 695 442.

It has been proposed in WO 00/09441 to employ a reforming process wherein the feedstock/steam mixture is subjected to primary reforming over a catalyst disposed in heated tubes in a heat exchange reformer, the resultant primary reformed gas is then subjected to secondary reforming by partially combusting the primary reformed gas with an oxygen-containing gas and bringing the resultant partially combusted gas towards equilibrium over a

secondary reforming catalyst, and then the resultant secondary reformed gas is used to heat the tubes of the heat exchange reformer. In the aforesaid WO 00/09441 carbon dioxide was separated from the product, before or after use thereof for the synthesis of carbon containing compounds, and recycled to the reformer feed. In one embodiment described in that
5 reference, the recycled carbon dioxide was part of the tail gas from a Fischer-Tropsch (F-T) synthesis process, and was added to the natural gas feedstock prior to desulphurisation of the latter.

US-A-5733941 describes an F-T process wherein the synthesis gas is produced in an autothermal reformer. The F-T tail gas is combusted and used to drive a power turbine. The
10 heat from the reformer is passed through a plurality of heat exchangers and the recovered heat is used to raise steam and to pre-heat the reformer hydrocarbon feed gas, F-T synthesis gas feed and the F-T tail gas. Although the tail gas is used for power generation, there is still the need for high pressure (HP) steam generation from the heat of the reformer.

US-B-6172124 describes a gas-to-liquids process in which the F-T tail gas is used to fuel a gas turbine which powers the air compressors used in the process. The synthesis gas is also made in an autothermal reformer in which air and steam is reacted with the hydrocarbon feed gas to generate a syngas mixture containing nitrogen, carbon monoxide and hydrogen. The heat generated in the reformer is recovered from the syngas stream and
20 used to generate steam.

When secondary reformed gas is used to heat the tubes of the heat exchange reformer in which the primary reforming reaction takes place, i.e. when a GHR reactor is used for the production of syngas, the heat from the reforming reaction is recovered efficiently without the need for HP steam generating plant. This is in contrast with the operation of a conventional
25 autothermal reformer, as described for example in US-A-5733941 and US-B-6172124 where the heat from the syngas product stream must be recovered in a system of heat exchangers and used for steam generation. Whilst the use of a GHR for production of syngas offers the potential for reducing the steam generation plant required, the overall power requirements of the gas-to-liquids process usually require that steam generation plant is provided for
30 generation of power by means of steam turbines etc. Such steam generation plant may be fuelled by the F-T tail gas, supplemented with another fuel source, e.g. natural gas which could otherwise be used to generate syngas. Clearly the use of supplemental fuel reduces the overall carbon efficiency of the gas-to-liquids process and the necessity to provide steam generation adds to the cost of the plant.

35

We have now found that a gas-to-liquids process may be made more efficient by the use of a gas-heated reactor (GHR) for the generation of the syngas used in an F-T process when the F-T tail gas is used to fuel a gas turbine for power generation.

Accordingly the present invention provides a process for the production of hydrocarbons by the Fischer-Tropsch reaction comprising

- a) subjecting a mixture of a gaseous low-hydrocarbon feedstock and steam to steam reforming by
 - i) passing the mixture over a catalyst disposed in heated tubes in a heat exchange reformer,
 - ii) subjecting the resultant primary reformed gas to secondary reforming by partially combusting the primary reformed gas with oxygen and bringing the resultant partially combusted gas towards equilibrium over a secondary reforming catalyst, and
 - iii) using the resultant secondary reformed gas to heat the tubes of the heat exchange reformer, thereby producing a partially cooled reformed gas,
- b) further cooling the partially cooled reformed gas to below the dew point of the steam therein to condense water and separating condensed water to give a de-watered synthesis gas,
- c) passing said de-watered synthesis gas through a hydrocarbon synthesis reaction to form a reaction products stream,
- d) separating at least a part of said reaction products stream into a hydrocarbons product stream and a tail gas stream,
- e) combusting at least a part of said tail gas to produce a combustion gas, and
- f) using said combustion gas to drive a turbine, thereby to produce power from said turbine.

In a further aspect of the invention, we provide a chemical plant apparatus for producing a liquid hydrocarbon product from a low-hydrocarbon feed gas and steam comprising:

- a) a heat exchange primary reformer which comprises a shell, a plurality of reaction tubes disposed within said shell and containing a reforming catalyst, and means for flowing a heat transfer medium within said shell to heat said reaction tubes,
- b) a secondary reformer comprising an upstream combustion region and a downstream reforming region comprising a bed of a reforming catalyst, and means to introduce an oxygen-rich gas and a primary reformed gas into said combustion region,
- c) means to transfer a secondary reformed gas from said secondary reformer into the shell of said primary reformer
- d) means for transferring said secondary reformed gas from said primary reformer shell via dewatering means to a hydrocarbon synthesis reactor
- e) a hydrocarbon synthesis reactor
- f) means for separating a synthesised hydrocarbon stream produced in said hydrocarbon synthesis reactor into a liquid hydrocarbon product stream and a tail gas stream

- g) gas turbine apparatus comprising an air compressor, a combustion chamber and a turbine unit
- h) means for transferring at least a portion of said tail gas to the combustion chamber of said gas turbine.

5

The amount of oxygen required in the secondary reformer is determined by two main considerations, viz. the desired composition of the product gas, and the heat balance of the heat exchange reformer. Thus generally increasing the amount of oxygen causes the $[H_2] / [CO]$ ratio to decrease and the proportion of carbon dioxide to decrease. Alternatively, if the conditions are arranged such that the product composition and temperature is kept constant, increasing the temperature at which the feedstock is fed to the heat exchange reformer decreases the amount of oxygen (at a constant oxygen feed temperature) required. Decreasing the required amount of oxygen is advantageous as this means that a smaller, and hence cheaper, air separation plant can be employed to produce the oxygen. The temperature of the feedstock can be increased by any suitable heat source, which may, if necessary, be a fired heater, which of course can use air, rather than oxygen, for the combustion.

10

15

20

The oxygen which is combusted with the primary reformed gas in step a)(ii) is provided by feeding an oxygen-rich gas which is preferably > 90% especially >95% oxygen. The oxygen-rich gas is preferably produced in an air-separation unit. The use of an oxygen-rich gas instead of air to provide the oxygen for partial combustion of the primary reformed gas reduces the volume of inert gas (mostly nitrogen) introduced into the process. Any inerts are purged in the tail gas stream and therefore the presence of inert gases reduces the BTU content of the tail gas stream.

25

The hydrocarbon synthesis reaction is preferably a Fischer-Tropsch (F-T) reaction such as is well known in the prior art. In an F-T process a synthesis gas containing carbon monoxide and hydrogen is reacted in the presence of a catalyst, which is typically a cobalt- and/or iron-containing composition. The desired products are liquid hydrocarbons which are separated from the residual reaction products stream. Part of the F-T reaction products stream is usually recycled to the F-T process, however in order to avoid a build-up of inerts in the process, a purge stream of F-T tail gas is also separated from the reaction products stream. The F-T reactor requires continuous cooling and the heat removed may be used to generate LP steam.

30

35

At least a part of the tail gas stream, which contains some hydrogen and hydrocarbon is used to fuel a gas turbine apparatus for power generation after LPG recovery. Optionally, one or more additional purge streams, for example from H_2 recovery or a hydrocracker, may be combined with the F-T tail gas stream prior to feeding to the gas turbine combustor. A further part of the tail gas stream may be recycled to the secondary reformer. The fuel value of the tail gas is generally in the range 2000-10000 BTU/lb.

The gas turbine is of conventional form and comprises an air compressor, a combustion chamber and the turbine apparatus within which the combustion gases are expanded to drive the turbine and thereby rotate the power-output shaft(s). The tail gas is fed to the combustion chamber of the gas turbine where it is combusted with the air from the air compressor. Heat is preferably recovered from the turbine exhaust gas and used in the process. For example, the heat present in the gas turbine exhaust gas can be used to superheat the low pressure (LP) steam from the F-T reactor and to provide heat for the process steam saturator system. Additional supplementary fuel may be combusted in the exhaust duct to provide sufficient heat. The superheated LP steam is used to drive steam turbines.

In a preferred embodiment, some of the air from the air compressor section of the gas turbine is diverted to the air separation unit which supplies the oxygen-rich combustion gas for the secondary reformer. In this case means such as a conduit for transporting the diverted air is provided in the plant. This has the advantage of reducing the power requirement of any air compressor which supplies the air separation unit. Typically an amount of up to about 20% of the gas turbine compressor volumetric air flow may be extracted for supply to the air separation unit.

When the oxygen-rich gas for the secondary reforming reaction is provided by an air separation unit, a significant amount of unwanted inert gas (mostly nitrogen) is also formed in pressurised form. It is further preferred that the inert gases, generated from the air separation process, are injected into the gas turbine in order to increase the volume of gas flowing through the turbine and thus increase the power output. In this embodiment conduit means are provided to transport the gas from the air separation unit to the gas turbine apparatus.

Some heat exchange between the compressed air stream and the inert stream from the air separator may advantageously take place in order to heat the inerts and cool the compressed air slightly before injection into the gas turbine. When operating with an injection of inerts, it is preferred to balance, at least approximately, the flows through the gas turbine compressor and the turbine. Therefore the molar flow-rate of inert gas injected into the turbine and the molar flow-rate of compressed air diverted from the gas turbine compressor are preferably kept approximately equal.

The power generated by the gas turbine may be used directly to provide power to a number of the process operations within the gas to liquids process. The power may be used directly for driving e.g. the air separation unit, the F-T recycle compressor, tail gas compressor or LPG recovery refrigeration system. Some or all of the power may be led to an alternator to provide electricity where needed in the process.

If necessary, a supplemental fuel may be supplied to the gas turbine apparatus if the fuel value available in the tail gas is insufficient to supply the power required for the process operations. Conveniently the supplemental fuel is natural gas because it is likely that a

natural gas supply will be available to provide the hydrocarbon feedstock for the reforming operation.

The gas turbine apparatus is selected to be of an appropriate size and specification for the plant, taking into account the gas flows available and the power output required.

- 5 Preferably the gas turbine is selected so as to operate at between 80% and 100% of its capacity to maximise the cost efficiency of the unit. The skilled person may, using his experience, select a suitable gas turbine apparatus for a particular plant design.

The invention is illustrated by reference to the accompanying drawing which is a diagrammatic flowsheet of one embodiment of the invention.

- 10 In the drawing, a mixture of a desulphurised hydrocarbon feedstock, for example natural gas, and steam is fed, typically at a pressure in the range 10 to 50 bar abs., via line 10 to a heat exchanger 12 and thence, via line 14, to the catalyst-containing tubes 16 of a heat exchange reformer 18. The mixture is typically heated to a temperature in the range 350 to 550°C prior to entry into the tubes 16. For simplicity only three tubes are shown in the
15 drawing: in practice there may be several tens or hundreds of such tubes.

- The feedstock/steam mixture undergoes primary steam reforming in the tubes 16 and the primary reformed gas leaves the heat exchange reformer 18 via line 20, typically at a temperature in the range 600 to 800°C. The primary reformed gas is fed via line 20 to a secondary reformer 30, to which oxygen is supplied via line 28. Air in line 22 is compressed
20 in air compressor 24 and fed to an air separation unit 26, from which an oxygen rich gas is fed via line 28 to the secondary reformer 30.

- The primary reformed gas/tail gas mixture is partially combusted in the secondary reformer and brought towards equilibrium by passage over a secondary reforming catalyst 32. The secondary reformed gas leaves secondary reformer via line 34, typically at a temperature
25 in the range 850 to 1150°C.

- Heat is recovered from the hot secondary reformed gas by passing the secondary reformed gas via line 34 to the shell side of the heat exchange reformer 18 so that the secondary reformed gas forms the heating medium of the heat exchange reformer. The secondary reformed gas is thus cooled by heat exchange with the gas undergoing reforming
30 in the tubes 16 and leaves the heat exchange reformer via line 36, typically at a temperature 50 to 150°C above the temperature at which the hydrocarbon feedstock/steam mixture is fed to the tubes 16.

- The partially cooled secondary reformed gas is then cooled further with heat recovery in one or more heat exchangers 38 to a temperature below the dew point of the water in the
35 secondary reformed gas. The recovered heat may be used to heat the process saturator (not shown) which provides process steam for the synthesis reaction. The cooled secondary reformed gas is then fed via line 40 to a separator 42 wherein condensed water is separated as a liquid water stream 44. This water can be recycled by heating it and contacting the

hydrocarbon feedstock with the resultant hot water in a saturator to provide the hydrocarbon steam mixture.

The remaining de-watered gas is then fed, via line 45, to an optional hydrogen separation unit 46, e.g. a membrane unit or a pressure swing adsorption stage, to separate part of the hydrogen in the de-watered gas as a hydrogen stream 48. Waste gas from this stage may be combined with F-T tail gas before combusting in a gas turbine. The resultant gas is then fed via line 50 to a Fischer-Tropsch synthesis reactor 52, and the product stream is separated in a separation unit 56, into a liquid hydrocarbons stream together with by-product water, as a hydrocarbons product stream 58. LP steam may be generated cool the FT reactor and this steam can be superheated to drive steam turbines. Part of the remaining tail gas stream is recycled to the F-T reactor 52 via line 61. Part of the tail gas is purged as stream 60 to avoid a build up of inerts, e.g. nitrogen which may be present in the hydrocarbon feedstock as a contaminant and/or is often present in small amounts as an impurity in the oxygen used for the partial combustion. The purged tail gas stream 60 is burned in the combustor 62 of a gas turbine unit.

The gas turbine unit comprises air compressor 66, combustor 62 and turbine 68. Air is supplied to compressor 66 by line 64. The combusted gas is expanded through the turbine unit 68, thereby generating power in the turbine shaft. Heat may be recovered from the turbine exhaust duct 74 via exchangers 78 and used in the process for LP steam superheating or process saturator heating. Additional heat may be introduced into the exhaust duct by combusting supplementary natural gas fuel in the duct introduced from line 76.

In one embodiment of the invention, line 70 may be used to transport compressed nitrogen and other inert gases from the air separation unit to the turbine inlet in order to increase the gas flow through turbine 68. Line 72 may be used in a further embodiment of the invention to transport a portion of the compressed air generated by the air compressor unit 66 to the air separation unit, which reduces the amount of power required by the air compressor 24 which supplies compressed air to the air separation unit 26.

The invention is further illustrated by then following calculated example of a process in accordance with the above flowsheet. In the following table the pressures (P, in bar abs.), temperatures (T, in °C) and flow rates (kg/h) of the various components of the streams are quoted, rounded to the nearest integer.

The examples in the table show the performance of a F-T liquids process producing 15,000 BBL/day of liquid hydrocarbon product. In comparative case (a) the F-T tail gas is combusted in a waste heat boiler (with supplementary natural gas firing) to generate HP steam for power generation. In case (b) which is a process according to the invention, the F-T tail gas is combusted in a gas turbine (with supplementary natural gas firing) to generate

power. In case (b) the process is essentially as described above and illustrated in the drawing. The process incorporates the optional features of injecting N₂ derived from the air separation unit into the gas turbine and of providing compressed air derived from the gas turbine air compressor to the air separation unit.

5

	(a) COMPARATIVE	(b) INVENTION
FUEL	(kg/h)	(kg/h)
FT tail gas	36450	36450
Gas turbine NG fuel	N/A	1497
Duct burner NG fuel	N/A	3514
WHB NG Fuel	7955	N/A
STEAM GENERATION	(te/h)	(te/h)
HP STEAM (40 BarA)	67	N/A
LP STEAM (13 BarA)	402	402
POWER DEMAND	74 MW	70 MW
POWER GENERATION	(MW)	(MW)
HP ASU TURBINE	4	N/A
LP ASU TURBINE	44.5	44
COMPRESSOR TURBINE DRIVES	3	3
ALTERNATOR TURBINE	22.5	N/A
GAS TURBINE	N/A	23
TOTAL	74	70
CARBON EFFICIENCY	75.4%	77.4%
ENERGY	8.5 GJ/BBL	8.29 GJ/BBL

It can be seen from the table that case (b) exhibits improvements in efficiency over comparative case (a). In addition, the requirement for HP steam generation has been eliminated in case (b) and thus the capital cost of the plant may be reduced accordingly.

Claims

1. A process for the production of hydrocarbons by the Fischer-Tropsch reaction comprising
 - a) subjecting a mixture of a gaseous low-hydrocarbon feedstock and steam to steam reforming by:
 - i. passing the mixture over a catalyst disposed in heated tubes in a heat exchange reformer,
 - ii. subjecting the resultant primary reformed gas to secondary reforming by partially combusting the primary reformed gas with oxygen and bringing the resultant partially combusted gas towards equilibrium over a secondary reforming catalyst, and
 - iii. using the resultant secondary reformed gas to heat the tubes of the heat exchange reformer, thereby producing a partially cooled reformed gas,
 - b) further cooling the partially cooled reformed gas to below the dew point of the steam therein to condense water and separating condensed water to give a de-watered synthesis gas,
 - c) passing said de-watered synthesis gas through a hydrocarbon synthesis reaction to form a reaction products stream,
 - d) separating at least a part of said reaction products stream into a hydrocarbons product stream and a tail gas stream,
 - e) combusting at least a part of said tail gas to produce a combustion gas, and
 - f) using said combustion gas to drive a turbine, thereby to produce power from said turbine.
2. A process as claimed in claim 1, wherein said oxygen is fed as an oxygen rich gas provided by an air separation unit and wherein nitrogen generated by said air separation unit is fed to said turbine.
3. A process as claimed in claim 1 or claim 2, wherein said turbine is a part of an integrated gas turbine apparatus comprising an air compressor for supplying compressed air for use in said gas turbine apparatus, a combustion chamber and said turbine.
4. A process as claimed in claim 3, wherein a portion of the compressed air is supplied to said air separation unit.
5. A process as claimed in any of the preceding claims wherein the exhaust gases from the gas turbine are passed through a heat exchanger to recover heat for use in the process.
6. A chemical plant apparatus for producing a liquid hydrocarbon product from a low-hydrocarbon feed gas and steam comprising:

- i) a heat exchange primary reformer which comprises a shell, a plurality of reaction tubes disposed within said shell and containing a reforming catalyst, and means for flowing a heat transfer medium within said shell to heat said reaction tubes,
 - j) a secondary reformer comprising an upstream combustion region and a downstream reforming region comprising a bed of a reforming catalyst, and means to introduce an oxygen-rich gas and a primary reformed gas into said combustion region,
 - k) means to transfer a secondary reformed gas from said secondary reformer into the shell of said primary reformer
 - l) means for transferring said secondary reformed gas from said primary reformer shell via dewatering means to a hydrocarbon synthesis reactor
 - m) a hydrocarbon synthesis reactor
 - n) means for separating a synthesised hydrocarbon stream produced in said hydrocarbon synthesis reactor into a liquid hydrocarbon product stream and a tail gas stream
 - o) gas turbine apparatus comprising an air compressor, a combustion chamber and a turbine unit
 - p) means for transferring at least a portion of said tail gas to the combustion chamber of said gas turbine.
7. An apparatus as claimed in claim 6, further comprising an air separation unit for separating air into an oxygen-rich gas for supply to said secondary reformer and a nitrogen-containing gas.
8. An apparatus as claimed in claim 7, further comprising means to introduce said nitrogen-containing gas into said gas turbine apparatus.
9. An apparatus as claimed in claim 7 or claim 8, further comprising means to introduce compressed air generated by said air compressor into said gas turbine apparatus.

Abstract

A process for the production of liquid hydrocarbons by the Fischer Tropsch reaction comprises the generation of syngas by steam reforming of a gaseous hydrocarbon stream in a gas-heated heat exchange reactor and secondary reforming in a secondary reformer in which the primary reformed gas is partially combusted with oxygen to supply heat. The secondary reformed gas is dewatered and supplied to the F-T reactor. F-T tail gas is burned in a gas turbine for power generation.

